

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 03472 261158Z

51 20

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 INR-07

CIAE-00 DODE-00 SR-02 ORM-01 SAM-01 L-02 PRS-01

USIA-06 AID-05 /061 W

----- 108746

R 251303Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4104

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 3472

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VS

SUBJ: LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD FROM LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER

NGUYEN BA CAN AND SENATE PRESIDENT TRAN VAN LAM

1. THERE FOLLOWS TEXT OF LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD FROM LEADERS OF THE TWO HOUSES OF THE RVN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. TEXT IS NOT BEING MADE PUBLIC HERE BUT THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION TO MAKING IT PUBLIC IN WASHINGTON. ORIGINAL BEING POUCHED EA/VN.

2. BEGIN TEXT: SAIGON, MARCH 24, 1975. DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

3. REPRESENTING THE TWO CHAMBERS OF THE VIETNAMESE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WE MAKE BOLD IN WRITING TO YOU ON BEHALF OF TWENTY MILLION SOUTH VIETNAMESE, INCLUDING MORE THAN HALF A MILLION NEW REFUGEES CAUSED BY THE RECENT COMMUNIST ATTACKS IN OUR COUNTRY.

4. WE ARE WRITING TO YOU ALSO AS ALLIES SINCE THIS WAR WHICH WAS STARTED, PERPETUATED AND NURTURED NEITHER BY THE UNITED STATES NOR BY SOUTH VIETNAM HAS BOUND THE DESTINIES OF OUR TWO NATIONS TOGETHER IN THE LAST TWO DECADES. WE ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE TOGETHER AND IT IS ONLY FITTING THAT WE TRIED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM TOGETHER: TOGETHER THE U.S. AND SOUTH VIETNAM WENT TO PARIS, TOGETHER WE SIGNED THE AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 03472 261158Z

PEACE IN VIETNAM, TOGETHER WE GAVE OUR WORD AND GUARANTEE THAT WE

WOULD RESPECT IT AND FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS AS THEY ARE DEFINED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THE AGREEMENT WAS FOLLOWED BY A INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH AN INTERNATIONAL ACT WHICH MADE EXPLICIT ALL THE GREAT POWERS' GUARANTEES OF ITS VALIDITY.

5. IT WAS IN THIS BELIEF THAT WE IN THE VIETNAMESE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH STRONGLY URGED OUR PRESIDENT TO SIGN THE PARIS AGREEMENT, THUS BRINGING AN HONORABLE END TO THE DIRECT COMMITMENT OF AMERICAN TROOPS IN VIETNAM. THUS, NO ONE CAN BLAME US FOR WANTING TO PROLONG THE WAR OR NOT KEEPING OUR END OF THE BARGAIN.

6. AT THAT TIME, WE WERE GIVEN ASSURANCES BY THE UNITED STATES THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND RED CHINA WILL GRADUALLY REDUCE THEIR MILITARY AID TO NORTH VIETNAM. BUT THE EXPERIENCES OF THE LAST TWO YEARS SINCE THE CEASEFIRE SHOWED INSTEAD AN UNPRECEDENTED BUILDING UP HANOI'S MILITARY ARSENAL.

7. WE WERE ALSO GIVEN ASSURANCES THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD CONTINUE USING ITS POWER, IN COMBINATION WITH THE PERSUASIVE POWER OF PEKING AND MOSCOW, TO RESTRAIN NORTH VIETNAM AND ENFORCE THE RESPECT OF THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT. HANOI, OF COURSE, WENT ON FLOUNTING EVERY PROVISION OF THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT EVER SINCE.

8. ANOTHER COMMITMENT WAS EVEN INCORPORATED INTO THE TEXT OF THE AGREEMENT: FIFTEEN DAYS AFTER THE CEASEFIRE WENT INTO EFFECT, ALL NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS WERE TO BE REMOVED FROM LAOS AND CAMBODIA. NOW MORE THAN TWO YEARS HAVE ELAPSED AND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF THEM ARE STILL IN THESE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

9. KNOWING FULL WELL WHAT THE COMMUNIST LEADERS IN HANOI WERE UP TO, THE UNITED STATES HAS, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, PROMISED VIGOROUS AND IMMEDIATE REACTION IN CASE NORTH VIETNAM LAUNCHED AN OFFENSIVE. NOW THEY HAVE ACCUMULATED MORE THAN EIGHTY THOUSAND VIOLATIONS OF THE CEASEFIRE AND ARE LAUNCHING WHAT IS BEING THE LARGEST AND MOST POWERFUL OFFENSIVE OF THE ENTIRE WAR.

10. THE UNITED STATES ALSO PROMISED US TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID, NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF LENGTHENING THE WAR BUT SIMPLY BECAUSE THE DEFENSE OF PEACE MUST REST ON ARMED AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH. THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAIGON 03472 261158Z

OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE THAT WAS SOLEMNLY UPHELD AND GUARANTEED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT WOULD TURN OUT TO BE EMPTY WORDS IF IT CANNOT BE ASSURED THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH IT CAN BE EXPRESSED FULLY AND FREELY, NOT UNDER THE THREAT OF NAKED FORCE. THUS AMERICAN CONTINUED AID TO MAINTAIN A CERTAIN DEGREE OF BALANCE OF FORCES IS A SINE QUA NON CONDITION OF PEACE IN OUR TORTURED
LAND.

11. THIS IN FACT WAS EVEN WRITTEN INTO THE AGREEMENT UNDER THE CLAUSE OF ONE-TO-ONE REPLACEMENT OF ARVN EQUIPMENT. THE VERY PROVISION OF ONE-TO-ONE REPLACEMENT REFLECTED OUR GOODWILL FOR PEACE SINCE IT PRECLUDED ANY ESCALATION IN THE AID. INSTEAD OF TYING THE QUESTION OF MILITARY AID THAT COMES TO SAIGON TO THE LEVEL OF AID RECEIVED BY HANOI, THE ONE-TO-ONE REPLACEMENT PROVISION IN ITSELF REPRESENTED A CEILING OF AID TO SOUTH VIETNAM. YET WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANYTHING APPROACHING ONE-TO-ONE REPLACEMENT, THUS RESULTING DRASTIC REDUCTION OF OUR CAPABILITIES. NOW, SIX OUT OF SEVEN AIRPLANES IN OUR ARMED FORCES ARE GROUNDED FOR LACK OF FUEL OR SPARE PARTS. OTHERS WERE DESTROYED BY ENEMY ANTI-AIRCRAFT WITHOUT GETTING REPLACED. OUR FIREPOWER AND MOBILITY HAVE ALL BEEN SEVERELY LIMITED RESULTING IN AN UNPRECEDENTED LOW-LEVEL CAPACITY. AND ALL OF THIS HAPPENED NOT BECAUSE WE DO NOT HAVE THE MANPOWER (ALL OUR PILOTS ARE STILL THERE) OR BECAUSE WE ARE UNWILLING TO FIGHT FOR OUR SURVIVAL.

12. AS A RESULT OF THE ABOVE-SAID DEFECTION, WHAT CAN NOT BE SEEN CLEARLY IN SOUTH VIETNAM IS THE INCREASING DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION. THOUSANDS OF PERSONS HAVE BEEN KILLED AND HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF OTHERS HAVE FLED TO THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED AREAS, LEAVING BEHIND ALL THEIR PROPERTIES.

13. GIVEN THE COMMUNIST SUPERIORITY IN FIREPOWER AND MANPOWER AS A RESULT OF THEIR VIOLATIONS OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT WITH IMPUNITY, THE GREATEST CONCERN NOW PREVAILING IN SOUTH VIETNAM IS THE DIRECT THREAT OF A QUICK OVER-RUNNING OF MANY AREAS IN THE COUNTRY BY COMMUNIST FORCES.

14. WHEN THE PARIS AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED, IT WAS HAILED AS A FOUNDATION OF A PEACE WITH HONOUR, SINCE IT WAS ENTIRELY BUILT ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAIGON 03472 261158Z

PEOPLE. WE OURSELVES WOULD CONTINUE TO BELIEVE SO, HAD IT BEEN SCRUPULOUSLY RESPECTED BY NORTH VIETNAM, JUST AS THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAVE DONE.

15. BUT CONTRARY TO OUR HOPE THE FOUNDATION OF PEACE IS SEVERELY THREATENED BECAUSE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE ONCE AGAIN DECIDED TO SEEK A MILITARY CONQUEST OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

16. AS A MATTER OF EMERGENCY, THEREFORE, WE RESPECTFULLY URGE YOU TO TAKE ALL THE NECESSARY ACTIONS TO PRESERVE THE PEACE AND TO DETER NORTH VIETNAM ONCE AND FOR ALL FROM CARRYING OUT ITS AMBITION. WE RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THAT YOU DO WHAT EVER IS REQUIRED TO:

1. RESTORE THE PARIS AGREEMENT TO THE INITIAL CONDITION, THAT IS TO FORCE THE COMMUNIST BACK TO THEIR POSITIONS WHICH EXISTED ON

JANUARY 27,1973 AND 2. PROMPTLY SUPPLY US WITH URGENT MEANS TO
COUNTER ATTACK THE OFFENSIVE.

17. IN THIS, YOU CAN ONLY BE RIGHT, FOR IN DOING SO YOU WILL BE
UPHOLDING THE TWO MOST SACRED RIGHTS OF ALL NATIONS: THE RIGHT
TO SELF-DEFENSE CONSECRATED IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER AND THE
RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION OF A PEOPLE-THE VERY ROOT OF
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY.

18. IN CLOSING, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS AND
KIND SUPPORT TO OUR COMMON STRUGGLE AND WE WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS
IN THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITIES THAT YOUR HIGH OFFICE, MR PRESIDENT,
DEVOLVES UPON YOUR PERSON.

19. SINCERELY YOURS, NGUYEN BA CAN, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM; TRAN VAN LAM,
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

20. PRESIDENT GERALD FORD, THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C.
END TEXT.
LEHMANN

CONFIDENTIA

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, REFUGEES, TREATY VIOLATION, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchandr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SAIGON03472
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750105-0478
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750318/aaaaapoz.tel
Line Count: 185
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchandr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2003 by buchandr>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD FROM LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER NGUYEN BA CAN AND SENATE PRESIDENT TRAN VAN LAM
TAGS: PFOR, VS, (FORD, GERALD R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006